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The Sleeping House

342 513 [417] The sleeping house *(fa'e* or *fa'e hiamoe)* stood on the rear half of a stone platform. (For description see House-building.) A ladder consisting of a notched log, or crevices between the stones of the walls, or projecting stones set in the walls of the platform, gave access to the front section of the platform *(paepae)*. On this open section of the platform, in front of the house, was a post *(fata* or *fata'a tu)* with projecting pieces of wood—the stubs of branches probably—on which food and containers were hung. Melville (33, p. 89) describes a small shed, which served as a storehouse, on the platform of the sleeping house in which he stayed. The doors of the houses were built small and low for protection. A man 574 entering another's house must always do so headfirst, so that the inmates 576 could see who he was. He approached the door, placed one foot on the red stone block which formed the sill, stooped, and entered. In leaving, the visitor went to the door, squatted on the sill, raised his hands above his head and placed them against the sides of the door, put his feet down on the platform below the sill, and then rose and went his way. This was the etiquette of entering and leaving the dwelling.

362 The front half of the interior of the house was paved with smooth beach 363 boulders, and here the inmates sat about when they were indoors. The bed space *(oki)* occupied the whole width of the rear half of the sleeping house. Coconut logs running the width of the house formed the front and rear boundaries of this sleeping space. Between the logs there was soft earth, on which were laid fern leaves, grass, and rough coconut leaf mats as paddling, fine mats forming the surface of the bed. To quote Linton's (20) description:

> Over the coconut mats were laid woven pandanus mats of two kinds. Those covering the front part of the bed were called *moena*, and were woven of broad strips. . . . The rear part of the bed was covered with a mat of finer weave, called *kahuaa*, which was not *tapu* to men (as were the *moena*). The *kahuaa* were long and narrow, a single one usually running the entire length of the house. It was placed so that it covered the rear half of the *moena* and the back log of the bed, its outer edge being tied up to the rafters. A narrow mat for the head was sometimes placed over the *kahuaa* to prevent its being stained by the oil with which the natives soaked their hair. . . . A pad of tapa was sometimes tied to the rear log of the bed under the *kahuaa*. Portable pillows called *nouni*, which were made from bundles of shredded *fei (huetu)* leaves wrapped and tied with tapa, were also used.

Dordillon (8) gives as terms used for pillow, *pati'eti'e, paepae u'u, paepae upo'o, u'una upo'o.*

352 Partitions *(pahe'e oto)*, separating a section of the interior of the dwelling, were sometimes made with cloth. Dordillon gives the term *ahu tapu*, meaning an elevation of stones at one end of the house on the inside, a

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776 dangerous, unless the spirit were neglected. Such possession manifested itself in a trance state.

As I have said above, I believe that modern informants confuse the ancient belief in *fanaua* with the possession of individuals by familiar spirits (*etua*) for purposes of divination and oracular utterance. When a familiar chose a woman as its servant and thus itself became that woman's servant, she had to feed it with offerings, else it would kill her and seek another controller. A woman who was possessed by and possessed a familiar in this way could send it on commissions, to inflict death upon other women. When a woman had sent her familiar out on a commission, she could only recall it with very large gifts. Women thought to possess familiars often took advantage of the popular belief in order to extort gifts from others.

Vehine Hae

Vehine hae (wild women) is a term applied to fearful spirits in general. It was applied to phantoms of more or less indescribable nature and unknown origin. Other terms for such phantoms are *kaee* (8) and *etua peke eu mei* (god-angry-leaf-of-breadfruit). *Vehine hae* is most commonly applied to human specters or wandering ghosts. Again, in legends, the word is used for ogresses. As the name would imply, *vehine hae* are female evil spirits. A few instances have come to my notice, however, in which the word is applied to male spirits, but this is probably not a correct use of the term. *Vehine hae* manifested themselves in various ways. [824] Whistling of unknown origin was attributed to them and the squeaking sound made by the branches of *fau* trees moving slightly in the breeze or any other eerie sounds were thought to be their voices. Cries heard in the mountains after nightfall, and evil odors that assailed walkers at night were thought to come from these spirits. They were conceived of as being able to assume different forms: one was sometimes seen in the form of a cat, a dog, or a cow. At Taiohae it is believed that there is a *vehine hae* in the form of a woman, dressed always in white with long black hair, who is to be seen walking along a certain section of the waterfront at night. On account of the belief that these spirits were abroad at night, there is now, and probably has always been, very little promenading in the [513] Marquesas at night except by bright moonlight. Today it is fear of *vehine hae* that makes natives close up their houses as tightly as possible when they sleep.

According to Père Jean (19) spirits from Havai'i were supposed to come frequently upon the earth and were seen as *vehine hae*, appearing only at night. *Vehine hae*, seen always with the head and eyes turned

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THE HOUSE DOOR

342 No doors of the ancient type have survived, but good descriptions were obtained from informants. The doorway was normally in the middle of the front wall, the central pair of posts being placed relatively close together to form the jambs, while the top stringer of the wall formed the lintel. In many houses, however, a separate lintel was placed some distance below the stringer. The doorway was then so low that a person entering was compelled to bend almost double. The object of the low doorway was purely defensive. Both high and low doorways were used in all the islands in ancient times. Two forms of door are said to have been used with the high doorways. One of these consisted of two coconut leaf mats of the sort used for thatch, one of which was tied to either door post. To close the aperture the edges of the mats were drawn together and tied. The second form of door was made by planting two strong posts in the house floor, one close behind either doorpost; two heavy planks, as high as the doorway and more than half as wide, were then hewn from breadfruit wood and placed between the door posts and inner posts on either side of the doorway, the whole forming a crude double-leafed sliding door. To close the door the two planks were slid out from either side of the doorway meeting the middle. Stewart (59, pp. 233-236) speaks of "a small door in the middle, furnished with a shutter, in a slide, to be closed or opened at pleasure." Informants in Hiva Oa said that the small doorways there were provided with a single-leafed sliding door, although the exact arrangement had been forgotten. According to informants in the valley of Pua Ma'u, Hiva Oa, the doorways, whether high or low, were arranged with inner posts, like those already described, but were closed by laying a number of timbers of breadfruit wood, one above the other, in the space between the front posts and inner posts.

INTERIOR ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOUSE

352 (342) The interior of the house consisted usually of a single room, without partitions, but Kruesenstern (34, p. 161) and Gracia (28, p. 123) both say that in the better houses one end was divided off by a bamboo partition and was used as a storeroom for valuables and Handy (32) reports tapa curtains called *kahu pahee ioto* sometimes used in Nuku Hiva. There was no furniture; even the stools used by some of the other Polynesian groups were lacking. The bed formed an integral part of the house. 352 513 A strip comprising the rear half of the house-floor was left unpaved at the time of the construction of the *paepae*, and this was leveled and filled with soft earth, free from stones, until its surface was six to eight inches below the paved forward portion of the house-floor. Two carefully dressed palm logs eight inches to a foot in diameter were then laid along either edge of the depression. The straightness and polish of these logs were the pride

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of the owner of the house. Two short additional pieces of palm log sometimes were laid transversely at either end of the bed space, just within the bottoms of the end posts of the house; rarely the log along the back of the bed space was omitted. The space enclosed by the logs was first filled with a thick layer of tips of palm fronds, or with ferns. Over these were laid several coconut mats, similar to those used for thatching. The mats at the rear were occasionally placed over the back log and tied to the rafters at a height of about eight inches (Pl. XL, *E*). Over the coconut mats in turn were laid woven pandanus mats of two kinds. Those covering the front part of the bed were called *moena*, and were woven of broad strips, three-eighths of an inch or more in width. Mats of this sort were tapu to men, and the use of the word *moena* as a term of reproach is known to have led to at least one murder in recent times. The rear part of the bed was covered with a mat of finer weave, called *kahua'a*, which was not tapu to men. The *kahua'a* was long and narrow, a single one usually running the entire length of the house. It was so placed that it covered the rear half of the *moena* and the back log of the bed. The outer edge of the *kahua'a* was tied up to the rafters. A narrow mat for the head alone, called *pa'i pa'i*, was sometimes placed over the *kahua'a* to prevent its being stained by the oil with which the natives soaked their hair.

Occupants of the bed lay with their heads toward the wall, the *kahua'a* supporting the head and shoulders and the *moena* the lower part of the body. With persons of ordinary height the feet projected over the inner log and rested upon the bare stone pavement.

The elaborate pillows found in some parts of Polynesia were not used in the Marquesas, but a pad of tapa was sometimes tied to the rear log of the bed under the *kahua'a*. Portable pillows called *nouni*, made from bundles of shredded *fei* leaves wrapped and tied with tapa, were also used.

According to informants a special form of bed was used at Pua Ma'u, Hiva Oa in the houses of a fishermen's sacred place, and by at least some of the priests. This bed consisted of two or more pairs of short posts, connected at the top by crosspieces, supporting a layer of small closely spaced poles. The whole formed a long rectangular bench, or shelf, raised eighteen inches to two feet above the ground. Four elaborately carved wooden legs in the Bishop Museum may belong to a bed of this type. (See Pl. XLI, *A*.) In the fishermen's sacred place each of the houses, which were very small, contained two of these beds, one along either side. Priests, after they had eaten of the sacrifice, continued to live with their families when not engaged in religious rites, but slept in a separate raised bed built for them in the common dwelling. Only coconut mats were used upon the beds of priests and fishermen, due to the ceremonial uncleanness of bed mats

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352 of the ordinary type. It is probable that a single idea of defilement by contact
● 513 with the ground underlay this use of elevated beds and the construction of the *fata'a* and *tona pou*. (pp. 294-5). It is interesting to note that in Tonga according to McKern (41) the bed of the Tui Tonga was always elevated, although it appears to have simply been built up with rolls of tapa.

HOUSE DECORATION

342 In the Marquesas most dwellings and practically all ceremonial structures
531 were decorated to some extent. The *paepae* might be decorated with ornamental masonry, with figures carved in relief on the *ke'etu* facing of the raised house floor, or with small stone statues. In the house proper the decorations consisted of carved posts, ornamental lashings and occasionally of pigs' skulls. The use of human skulls as house decoration is doubtful.

DECORATION OF THE PAEPAE

The use of ornamental masonry in dwelling *paepae* seems to have been limited to the island of Nuku Hiva. There many of the house platforms had a row of *ke'etu* built into the front wall one or two feet below its top. The *ke'etu* were laid flat, with the long edge out, and from a little distance gave the effect of a narrow horizontal stripe or band—the regular width and reddish color contrasted pleasantly with the darker tint of the rough stones forming the bulk of the platform. *Ke'etu* so placed may have helped to tie the wall firmly to the earth and rough stonefill of the *paepae*, but long rough stones would have served equally well. In view of the labor required to quarry and transport the *ke'etu* it seems probable that their purpose was purely ornamental, and a proof of the wealth and influence of the owner of the house.

Some of the large dressed slabs of stone which faced the front of the raised house floor were carved. Two examples were noted: one in the valley of Haka Moui, Ua Pou; the other in the valley of Pua Ma'u, Hiva Oa. The Haka Moui site (32) is very unusual. The *paepae* was built with steps in three levels, one faced with large *ke'etu*. The *ke'etu* of the highest step were decorated with a zigzag pattern of ornamental adzing, and several of the other slabs bore full *tiki* figures or heads carved in very high relief. It is said that this structure was the residence of a chief; and became a *me'ae* upon his death. The decorations on the *ke'etu* of the Pua Ma'u site were much less elaborate; the main decoration of its *paepae* consisted of inset stone figures. On the upper side of one of the slabs facing the house floor a turtle, five inches long, was carved in low relief. The projecting end of the same slab bore a curious oval knob near the top and a beak-like projection at the bottom. This end carving is suggestive of a tenon for the attach-

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specialized in particular occupations, such as canoe making or carving. The products were distributed by means of a thoroughly organized trade in the form of social visits with gift exchanges. A tribe specializing in yellow dye would arrive with canoe-loads of the stuff. These expeditions were led by the chief, who was accompanied by perhaps one hundred men. They would start with a formal social gathering, during which sexual hospitality was usually extended to the visitors. Then the cargoes were presented. No mention was made of payment, but just before the visitors left, they would suggest indirectly that there was a shortage of a certain commodity in their tribe. Their hosts would then beg them to accept of their surplus of this commodity. The exchange was carried on with mutual benefit but no attempt to drive a shrewd bargain. Although a few objects might be brought for personal trade, the main load of the tribe's specialty was owned by the chief, and private individuals could not use any of it for trade purposes. Trade was organized by the chief, but at the close of the transaction, the goods would be prorated to all members of the tribe. Individual surpluses were exchanged on a quite similar basis, care being taken to eliminate the profit motive in all cases. These trade visits were still going on while I was in the Marquesas, although they had become of little importance.

Imperishable property, such as weapons, carvings, tools, and ornaments, was constantly changing hands, but the objects retained their names and individuality in the transfer. Gift exchange was as essential to social prestige as the giving of feasts. There is no question that, by primitive standards, the Marquesans were a wealthy group. All the early explorers made mention of the great number of things they had in their houses, rows of weapons, carved bowls, mats, etc. The explanation lies in the fact that they had a great deal of leisure, which they employed in making things. These articles were accumulated and handed down.

The Marquesans had a high standard of comfort. Their beds were the most luxurious to be found in the South Seas. The

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entire rear half of the houses, which were often fifty or sixty feet long, was given up to the beds. The bed had a foundation of springy brush, cocoanut fronds, ferns, and layers of grass, on top of which were placed woven mats. A polished cocoanut log running the entire length of the house served as a pillow. These beds were softer than many European beds, and the natives loafed on them when they had nothing else to do. They also built sloping back-rests on the stone house platforms so that they could sit there in comfort and watch everything that went on up and down the street. Clothing was unnecessary in this climate, but the Marquesans made elaborate ornaments for festival wear.

An ambitious, skillful man could use the leisure periods between harvests to create a surplus through craftsmanship or pig tending. However, if one was not ambitious, one could spend his leisure time loafing, singing, playing musical instruments or games, and, even to a considerable degree, in sexual play.

Attitude toward Objects

There was an amazing degree of individualization of objects among the Marquesans, everything being personified. Just as each individual was a distinct entity in his tribe, so every axe or food bowl or canoe was also a distinct entity and had a name. The same names were given to objects as to people, the names for weapons being taken from ancestral names of the owner's family. All canoes were given names, and a house not only went through the process of creation, but was hung with a loin cloth so that it would be decently clad when occupied.

It is difficult to say just how much the natives actually believed in this personification of objects. A properly made object achieved greater prestige value with use. A club which had killed three or four men had a tremendous amount of *mana;* the more *mana,* the greater the distinction of the weapon. The people had a sense for heirlooms; old objects which had been handed down had more value than new ones, even though the new ones boasted finer carving.

/20 cont./

pa'u An unidentified tree of this name, believed by informants to grow only in the western side of the central plateau of Nuku Hiva, provides bark which is used as an astringent in the same fashion as that of the kehika tree. 757 856

Some of these medications may be taken in a sequence as follows: moho ki'o, koku'u, ko'i'e, and tuei'au. Where it is impossible to obtain all of the medicinal source plants, such sequential dosage would not be possible, however, and one or two would be selected for use out of the possible alternatives. The medication, once begun, is continued up to the age of menstruation or a little before. If the girl was not treated in infancy, the treatment may be started at any time up to the age of ten years. Adults have been known to use the medication but in the two cases reported experienced rather dangerous side effects, such as extreme swelling of the mucus lining of the vagina, make such adult usage infrequent. The use of vaginal astringents is by no means a tottering survival. Most young couples use one or more of the astringents on their female children. Marquesans residing in Tahiti have requested that tu'ei'au, the most popular of the astringents, be prepared and sent to them. 757 832 [856]

In addition to the effects of the vaginal astringents, a mark of beauty or more appropriately physical acceptability in women is a flat symphysis pubis. To this end, the mons veneris is massaged during infancy and /21/ girlhood. Formerly this massage was accompanied by stretching of the labiae to elongate them. This was done by the mother during the daily bath. The child was seized by the ankles, its legs held apart while the mother manipulated the labiae with her lips. This practice is rare at present, however. 856 832 [[78]]

For male infants, no such early preparation occurs. The foreskin is pulled back and cleaned at bathing, however, as genital cleanliness is extremely important for the Marquesans. Therefore, care is taken that the foreskin will be flexible when the child grows older, so that cleanliness may be maintained. 855 515

Marquesan children have ample opportunity to observe much of adult sexual behavior. In the typical Marquesan house, 864 513

/21 cont./ 864 513
children sleep beside the parents. As most houses are quite small, parents and children are seldom far apart. Only when a child is 7 or 8 will some attempt be made to prevent it from witnessing the parents in coitus. (Most adults apparently prefer to believe that the children always are asleep, although the same adults can be prevailed upon to recount some of the acts which they witnessed as children.) Further, the association of infants with somewhat older children who "baby sit" during parts of the day, has the effect of placing the infant in a position to learn many of the overt practices of children. Marquesan children are therefore quite sophisticated at very early ages. This sophistication manifests itself in an early beginning of sexual play. 864 [854]

/22/ Masturbation (pau pau heke) among males begins about the age of three, or sometimes earlier. Many male children masturbate before they talk. The masturbation technique of children is exactly like that of adults -- the penis and hand are moistened with saliva to increase the sensation and ease. Most children are taught this by example of older boys. It was nearly impossible to obtain data on female masturbation, due to the extreme reluctance of women to discuss this on any terms with a male or female investigator. Only one occurrence was noted, this a story by a girl who claimed she had witnessed a very young girl in the Convent School of Atuona on Hiva Oa digitally masturbate in the mornings. It is probable that female masturbation is no less frequent than male masturbation, however, as males make frequent reference to female practices. 839 864 [871]

Young boys from the ages of 6 or 7 upward quite frequently gather surreptitiously in the bush for masturbation contests. The objects of these contests is to see who can ejaculate (manini, haka te'a) first. Naturally the younger members of these groups are physiologically incapable of ejaculation, and their participation appears to be based on their desire for sexual stimulation derived both from the actual manipulation of the genitals as well as from observing 859 864 839

/29 cont./
transition into a normal sex life somewhat easier. Most girls 836
begin sexual relations about the age of 11 or 12. It was note- [145]
worthy that in some cases menstruation started after the first
child. Menarche is certainly viewed as a milestone in the [881]
individual life cycle, for it was /30/ often well-remembered
by elderly women. It does not have the high emotional color-
ing attached to circumcision for the male, however. First
intercourse is usually with an adult male, frequently occurring
in a chance situation where the girl is surprised alone in the
brush or while in bathing. In Atuona, where the convent school [197]
for girls of the archipelago is maintained by the Missionaries [871]
of the Sacre's Coeurs de Piopus, many of the girls have their
first sexual experience while picking coffee on the mission
lands. There, during coffee season, the girls are sent out to
harvest the crop, but many of the male residents of the valley
wait in the dense brush around the coffee stands in hope of
finding a willing girl. Girls who do not receive the advances [839]
of males at these times are often raped with the help of their
more sophisticated girl friends, to insure that they will not
confess what they have witnessed.

Beside such frequent chance meetings in the bush, some contact occurs around the homes of girls approaching puberty. Nocturnal visitations by males begin and become more frequent as physical maturation becomes more obvious. Most of these night forays are unsuccessful due to the unsophisticated behavior of the girls, who are quite fearful of parental intrusion. Parents often take elaborate precautions to protect girls at this [513] time, forcing them to sleep in inaccessible corners of the house, with younger children or with the parents close by; forbidding trips to the latrine unchaperoned; closing all windows and doors tightly and tying a noisy dog around the house.

/31/ Under certain circumstances, however, the parents 836
will openly condone sexual relations for young girls, and go 548
so far as to force them into it if they feel that the rewards are 648
sufficient. The motivation in such cases is invariably economic.
The presence of a government fishing vessel in the archipelago [648]
provoked a wholesale business in bartering sexual favors for